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ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
BOX PATENT APPLICATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

July 16, 2001

RE: UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION
APPLICANT: Thomas Paul Downs
FOR: PROTECTIVE DIVIDER AND ENCLOSURE DISC ASSEMBLY
FOR LASER DISCS AND LASER DISC DRIVES.

Dear Assistant Commissioner,

Enclosed are the following:

Utility Patent Application Transmittal Form SB/05.

Statement Claiming Small Entity Status Form SB/09.

Fee Transmittal Form SB/17.

Postal Money Order # 02514542578 in the amount of: \$345.00

Signed Oath Letter.

Signed Notary Public Letter.

Specification, (pages numbered).

Claims, (each claim and page numbered).

Drawings, (each Fig., and page numbered).

Self addressed stamped postcard to return as my receipt.

Very truly yours,



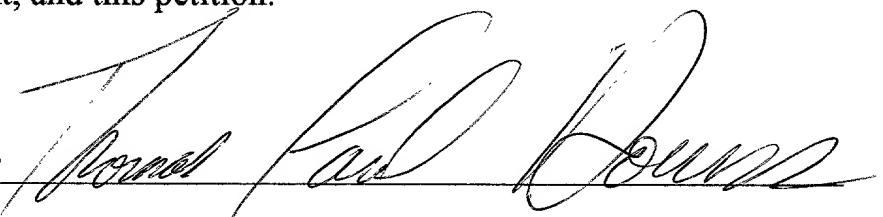
Paul Downs

Being duly sworn, I Thomas Paul Downs, depose and say that I am a citizen of the United States of America, residing at 5100 Inglewood Boulevard, Culver City, California 90230, County of Los Angeles, State of California; that I have read the foregoing specification and claims and I do verily believe that I am the original, first, and sole inventor of the invention of Protective Divider and Enclosure Disc Assembly For Laser Discs and Laser Disc Drives described and claimed therein; that I do not know and do not believe that this invention was ever known or used before my invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof, or more than one year prior to this application, or in public use or on sale in the United States more than one year prior to this application; that this invention has not been patented in any country foreign to the United States on an application filed by me or any legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months before this application; and that no application for patent on this invention has been filed by me or any legal representatives or assigns in any country foreign to the United States.

And I hereby appoint myself, Thomas Paul Downs, P.O. Box 3191 Beverly Hills, California 90212, as Patent Agent to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent Office connected therewith.

Wherefore I pray that Letters Patent be granted to me for the invention or discovery described and claimed in the foregoing specification and claims, and I hereby subscribe my name to the foregoing specification and claims, oath, power of Patent Agent, and this petition.

Inventor



(First Name)

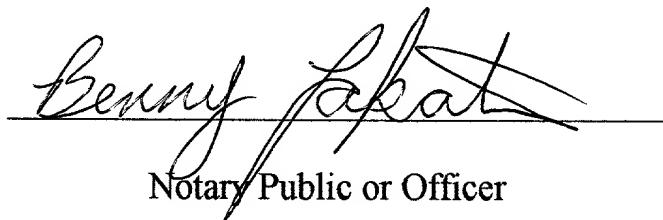
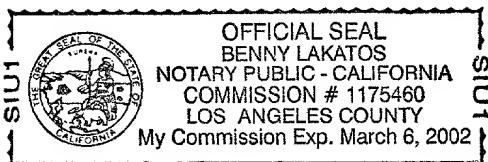
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Before me personally appeared Thomas Paul Downs, to me known to be the person described in the above application for patent, who signed the foregoing instrument in my presence, and made oath before me to the allegations set forth therein as being under oath, on the 16th day of July 2001.



Benny Lakatos
Notary Public or Officer

PROTECTIVE DIVIDER AND ENCLOSURE DISC ASSEMBLY FOR LASER DISCS AND LASER DISC DRIVES.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A substantially circular disc is disclosed for insertion between laser discs outside of a laser disc drive. The disc prevents surface scratching of laser discs. The disc is placed between laser discs outside of a case and between laser discs in laser disc cases, spindle containers, storage files and carrying cases. This invention further includes a laser disc enclosure for protecting both sides of a laser disc inside and outside of a laser disc drive.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There is an urgent need for separating and protecting laser discs from contacting each other and thereby scratching the recorded or blank audio and optical portions of a laser disc. There is no other protective disc in the prior art that meets this need. All laser disc care products in the prior art depend on polyester material. Polyester fabric was first used in computer floppy disc envelopes as sighted in U.S. Patents: 4,586,606 and 4,413,298. These fabric materials are intended for magnetic computer diskettes. In U.S. Patent: 5,588,527 for CD storage, polyester fabric material is considered softer than cellulosic fibers such as cotton fabric material. Polyester fabric is abrasive to CD's. U.S. Patents: 4,850,731 and 5,462,160 continue the use of polyester.

U.S. Patent: 4,610,352 realized cellulosic fibers compressed and thermally bonded together in a plurality of recessed discrete bonding points. U.S. Patent: 4,520,470 is a rotating laser disc cleaning device. This cleaning device uses natural or synthetic cleaning material, e.g., velvet, cotton or a brush. Velvet, cotton and a brush all have a very different effect on the surface of a laser disc. Respectfully, after years of research with material in this field of study, the applicant first started his work on U.S. Patent: 3,854,729 The Record Divider and Preservative. At the time of his research with various protective materials Pelon was studied and was decided that it was not right for a vinyl application. When laser discs were first introduced they were made of Du Pont Mylar and scratches would not affect them. Then when CD's were released G.E., Lexan was being used and scratches did affect them. The applicant of this invention has researched many fabrics to find strength properties similar to sheet stock and to be soft on CD's. The cotton protective disc of this invention is all that is needed for the protection of CD's outside of a laser disc drive. With five pounds of pressure from polyester on a CD the CD will scratch. With five pounds of pressure from compressed, Pelon cotton fabric material from .005 to .010 inches (5 to 10 mils) a CD will not be scratched. Thinner Pelon cotton fabric material will remain limp and will scratch CD's . Paper, Velvet, rubber, Polycarbonates and of course a brush will all scratch CD's.

A very strong course of study into the precise use of material for this application first began with the awareness of debris that could develop from the use of certain materials to protect a particular vinyl, magnetic or CD surface along with the disc drive. For many people working in this study of the prior art, polyester material was found to be the best. In the applicants first studies with Pelon cotton material for use on the vinyl phonograph record, the Pelon fabric material was still in a very thin state and produced debris, surface scratches and required a backing sheet to be adhered to a protective discs. Now Pelon cotton material in it's thickest stock is perfect for the application of protecting CD's and vinyl records without any problem of debris.

This invention further includes a protective disc enclosure for laser discs inside and outside a disc drive. This enclosure disc envelops a laser disc protecting both sides from scratches and dirt. The Pelon cotton protective disc is used with each protective disc enclosure outside of a disc drive to protect the outer surfaces of the protective disc enclosures from being scratched and thus causing damage to laser readable areas of the respective laser discs. If the surface of an enclosure disc or enclosure disc cover becomes scratched it can be replaced, thereby preserving the life of any laser disc recording.

As will be seen from the foregoing drawings and description, the applicant's invention comprises a disc of cotton material intended for separating laser discs outside of a laser disc drive and inside of laser disc cases, spindle containers, storage files, carrying cases and laser discs outside of a case. This invention further includes a laser disc protective enclosure, comprising a complete enclosure of the recorded or blank portion and the label area of a laser disc.

The known prior art relating to protective discs for laser discs includes the following U.S. Patents: 4,413,298; 5,588,527; 4,850,731; 5,462,160; 4,610,352; 4,520,470; 3,854,729; 4,586,606; 4,276,636; 1,683,440 and 4,316,281.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention comprises a disc inserted between laser discs. The disc is placed between laser discs to prevent the discs from contacting each other; said disc is composed of a stiff, Pelon cotton fabric material 24 having a thickness of 5 to 10 mills 0.005 to 0.010 inches. The disc, designated by reference numeral 40, comprises a center aperture 32 equal in size to the aperture of a laser disc.

As will be seen, this invention also includes a laser disc enclosure represented by reference numeral 50. Disc 50 has a outside peripheral edge 54 and a inside peripheral edge 55 to fit around the outer edge of a laser disc. Disc 50 has a center aperture 61 measuring larger than the aperture of a laser disc. Enclosure disc cover 60 has a center aperture 72 measuring larger than the aperture of a laser disc. A laser disc is placed inside disc 50 and the enclosure disc cover 60 is placed on top of the laser disc fitting in a tight relationship. Enclosure disc cover 60 fits under the outer beveled edge 55 in a close juxtaposition relationship enclosing the laser disc inside a protective enclosure. The enclosure disc and cover are releasable or permanently attached.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a plan view of the protective disc.

Figure 2 is a top plan view of the enclosure disc.

Figure 3 is a plan view of the enclosure disc cover.

Figure 4 is a top fragmented view of the enclosure disc showing a laser disc enclosed inside the enclosure disc and cover.

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view taken on line 7-7 of Figure 4 showing the enclosure disc on the bottom, a laser disc in the middle and the enclosure disc cover on top.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the drawings in this case and particularly to Figure 1, it may be seen that the invention includes a substantially circular or annular disc generally designated by reference numeral 40. Disc 40 is adapted for use as a protective disc placed between laser discs outside of a laser disc drive. Disc 40 is placed between laser discs outside or inside laser disc cases, spindle containers, storage files and carrying cases.

The disc thus prevents the laser discs from contacting each other, thereby protecting the laser discs from scratching and damaging the blank or recorded surfaces.

The disc in its preferred embodiment is seen in Figure 1, wherein disc 40 comprises sheet stock of Pelon cotton fabric material 24 (as shown in Figure 1) having a thickness in the range of 5 to 10 mils or between 0.005 to 0.010 inches.

As seen in the preferred embodiment, disc 40 has a diameter substantially similar to the diameter of a laser disc. Disc 40 has a center aperture 32 substantially similar to the diameter of a laser disc.

Referring to Figure 2, it may be seen that the enclosure disc designated by reference numeral 50, comprises a substantially circular or annular disc, having a centrally located hole or aperture 61. Said aperture 61 is larger than the aperture of a laser disc. Said aperture 61 is larger than the aperture of a laser disc to avoid any interference with the laser disc drive.

The enclosure disc 50 comprises a body portion 52 made of clear plastic Du Pont, Mylar or General Electric, Lexan material with outer peripheral edge 54 and inner peripheral edge 55 to hold the laser disc.

As shown in Figure 3, the enclosure disc cover designated by reference numeral 60 comprises a centrally located aperture 72 larger than the aperture of a laser disc to avoid any interference with a laser disc drive. Disc 60 comprises a body portion 62 made of clear plastic Du Pont, Mylar or General Electric, Lexan material and a outer peripheral edge 64 substantially similar to the diameter of a laser disc.

As shown in Figure 4, enclosure disc 50 is holding laser disc 90 in a tight, abutting, relationship. The outer peripheral beveled edge 55 of disc 50 fits around the outer peripheral edge 98 of laser disc 90.

Enclosure disc cover 60 is placed on top of laser disc 90. The center aperture 91 of laser disc 90 and the center aperture 61 of enclosure disc 50 and the center aperture 72 of the enclosure disc cover 60 have the same central axis and in effect form two concentric circles. Aperture 61 of enclosure disc 50 and aperture 72 of enclosure disc cover 60 have the same diameter larger than center aperture 91 of laser disc 90. Enclosure disc cover 60 extends radially outward from center aperture 72 to the outermost peripheral edge 64. The outer peripheral edge 64 of the enclosure disc cover 60 fits over the outer peripheral edge 98 of laser disc 90 and under the peripheral beveled edge 55 of enclosure disc 50 enclosing the laser disc in a releasable or permanent protective enclosure.

As shown in Figure 5, laser disc 90 is enclosed by enclosure disc 50 and enclosure disc cover 60. Enclosure disc area 52 extends radially outward from the center aperture 61 to the outer peripheral beveled edge 55. The center aperture 61 of enclosure disc 50 is larger than laser disc center aperture 91. Enclosure disc aperture 61 measures approximately 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. The center aperture 72 of enclosure disc cover 60 is larger than laser disc center aperture 91. Enclosure disc cover aperture measures approximately 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.

The outer peripheral edge 54 and the beveled edge 55 fits around the outer peripheral edge 98 of a laser disc. The outer peripheral edge 64 of enclosure disc cover 60 extends over the outer peripheral edge 98 of the laser disc and fits under the peripheral beveled edge 55 of enclosure disc 50. The clear plastic Mylar or Lexan material of enclosure disc 50 and enclosure disc cover 60 envelope the laser disc in a protective enclosure.